

**Testimony by Patty McNally**  
**On behalf of the North Central Regional Mental Health Board**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee**  
**IN OPPOSITION TO:**  
**The Governor's proposed DMHAS budget cuts for fiscal year 2016-17**  
**March 6, 2015**

This correspondence is in regards to the We Can Clubhouse sewing group. This group was started with funds from the Regional Consumer Advisory Council, which is a part of the North Central Regional Mental Health Board. Because of these funds the clubhouse was able to purchase four new sewing machines and other sewing tools. There was so much positive response to sewing that we had to increase the number of weekly groups from one to four.

It is a gift to see a person that is unable to engage in common everyday conversation due to constant voices in their head sit at a sewing machine while the voices seem to fade in to the background for a while. Then there is the woman that came in to the group, began sewing, and now has her own sewing machine at home. This woman reported the enjoyment of being able to take pride in her craft, create clothing for her family, and repair still useful clothing. I have another woman that gets on a bus in any weather to come here to sew and be part of a group of amiable people with a common goal. I could talk about the quilt that the group took a whole year to create and the man that designed one of the squares. He puffs up with pride when people admire his design. Oh, and I also have a man that could not sew a straight line to save his life but he did not give up. He was tireless in his quest to learn to sew and I now have a mini quilt hanging on the wall that he created. It is lovely. I could go on and on about the members that have come to this sewing group and left beaming with pride because they learned they could do something wonderful. That could not have happened if not for the RCAC Mini Grant Program and these stories that I have just briefly shared are only a few.

These accounts are from only the We Can Clubhouse sewing group and you can imagine how the funds provided by this RCAC Mini Grant Program impacted so many people around the state. It is cumulative, powerful, and one of the most important things our clients need to get a step up and so many of our clients have realized their potential because of this.

Please consider our Regional Mental Health Boards as a necessary part of our client care.

Respectfully Yours,

Patti McNally, CHR / We Can Psycho Social Club

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